

## CHAPTER 139

AN ACT establishing a Division of Early Childhood Education in the Department of Education and supplementing chapter 44 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

**BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Legislature finds and declares that: the enriched experience provided by quality early childhood education programs and services provides excellent preparation for success in school; studies have shown that the positive benefits to children of quality early childhood education programs outweigh the costs of providing these programs and include an increase in employment, a decrease in welfare dependence, a decrease in crime, and a decrease in other socially non-desirable behaviors in the later adult life of children served; in light of the importance of this issue, a Division of Early Childhood Education should be statutorily established in the Department of Education to focus on the States's initiatives to improve education for young students.

C.18A:44-6 Division of Early Childhood Education.

2. a. There is established a Division of Early Childhood Education in the Department of Education. The administrator and head of the division shall be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the division and shall devote his entire time to the performance of those duties.

b. The division shall be responsible for:

(1) setting required standards for early childhood education programs in the Abbott districts, districts receiving Early Childhood Program Aid and all other districts that operate preschool programs for three- and four-year olds that emphasize the quality necessary to meet children's needs, including, but not limited to, standards for teacher qualifications, program design and facilities;

(2) identifying and disseminating information on model early childhood education programs that meet and exceed high standards for program quality;

(3) the coordination of early childhood programs and services in consultation with the Department of Human Services;

(4) identifying the amount of funds necessary to implement successful early childhood education programs based on a comprehensive needs assessment;

(5) providing assistance, as needed, to school districts in implementing early childhood education programs;

(6) implementing the early childhood education orders of the New Jersey Supreme Court;

(7) overseeing the evaluation and monitoring of early childhood education programs in the Abbott districts, districts receiving Early Childhood Program Aid and all other districts that operate preschool programs for three- and four-year olds; and

(8) providing, in consultation with the Department of Human Services and the Abbott Implementation Advisory Council, an annual report to the Legislature and public on early childhood education

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved November 1, 2000.